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Master's Thesis of Global Sport Management

The Effect of Athlete Brand Personality on Athlete Attachment and Brand Supportive Behavior

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Abstract

Identifying what factors of athlete brand personality affect consumer's level of attachment to the athlete and brand supportive behavior is the most pressing issues as they are perceived to have a strong connection with consumers. Up-to-date, researches have been carried out emphasizing and conceptualizing athletes when promoting matches. Yet, few studies have investigated in terms of variables that affect level of consumer's attachment to the individual athlete, and brand supportive behavior. This article commenced with a primary object to identify the effect of athlete brand personality on athlete attachment and brand supportive behavior since the influence of athlete is getting bigger and bigger among the consumers as sport industry developed as time passes; and to offer valuable insights to sport academia and marketing practice to further retain customers and expand profits.

This study conducted an online survey obtaining 269 valid surveys. The study carried out data analysis for descriptive, confirmatory analysis, reliability analysis and structural equation modeling to examine the data. Thereafter, the valuable outcomes from this research clearly determined that

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which factors of athlete brand personality have a significant effect on athlete attachment and brand supportive behavior. The result of the analysis is as follow.

This examination proves that athlete brand personality: Charming, wholesome and imaginative have a positive direct/indirect effect on brand supportive behavior. On the flip side, the rest of athlete brand personality of tough has a no significant direct/indirect effect on brand supportive behavior, and even successful has a negative direct/indirect effect on brand supportive behavior.

In this regard, sport managers can utilize the information derived from this research to better understand the significance of specific traits of athlete brand personality influencing athlete attachment and brand supportive behavior. This in turn, will help sport marketers not only to make athlete stand out from the customers, but also expand profits from the products sponsored by the athlete.

Keyword: Athlete brand personality, Athlete attachment, Brand supportive behavior

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Introduction

Research Background

It is undeniable fact that many professional athletes recently gain individual celebrity status among fans. The increase in the number of their influence is certain due to a lot of their influence on almost everywhere in marketing field (Furedi 2010). Celebrities make their brand status from the mass consumption of their personalities and mass identities (Milligan 2004). Consequently, famous athletes such as Roger Federer, David Beckham, and LeBron James are perceived as human brands as increasing consumer's spending for products which is related to their images and names (Donavan 2013).

The term of human brand could be used to indicate famous person or its image, name and likeness utilized in marketing efforts (Thomson 2006). Without a doubt, social media, cable television, and any celebrity Web sites have all proliferated celebrity images (Furedi 2010, Gamson 2011). The industry of sport gets bigger and bigger as time passes, the role of the celebrities is getting important due to their huge influence on almost everywhere in any marketing field. Given the great popularity of

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professional athletes, numerous companies tend to tie their brands to athletes in order to transfer the athlete images onto the brand (Donavan 2013).

Since people tend to be more interested in focusing on celebrities rather than focusing on the message because of the effect of model on advertising, it would be much better to advertise in an emotional way to use celebrities instead of highlighting the feature of product. In other words, the consumer's connection with the brand could be increased by a brand personality (Aaker 1997). Many companies annually spend enormous sums of money in an effort to build psychological connection between celebrities and consumers. Companies are likely to tend to highlight of brand management with dead figures, such as John Wayne and Steve McQueen (Halpern 2005). The connection between professional athletes and consumers can be considered as a correlation between the entity's schema and consumer's schema, or identification (Bergami 2000).

It has become commonplace for many celebrities to introduce and advertise goods under their own celebrity brand in order to play successful

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key roles in the multimillion dollar industry of media and entertainment (Thomson 2006). The concept of human brand goes beyond particular marketing in public characters as endorsers for nonprofit enterprises or commercial (Erdogan 1999, Keel 2012). Thomson (2016) mentioned that celebrities represent human brands, which are commercially and professionally manageable and have features of traditional brands and additional associations. Celebrity-branded is tremendously powerful that a large number of celebrities (Timberlake, Sean "Diddy" Combs, etc.,) makes more profits through self-branded market than from their achievements in original careers (Casserly 2011).

Few researches have conducted when it comes to variables that have the effect of fan identification on team related result and, individual athletes while organization like NBA (National Basketball Association) has made great efforts to highlight individual players when promoting games (Donavan 2013). With this point of celebrities reputation comes the importance to understand what variables affect consumer perspective of how to control these perspective and the celebrity brand (Julie Guidry Moulard 2015). The brand that is a celebrity endorses, without a doubt, has been proved to influence celebrity brand (Halonen-Knight 2010, Doss 2011,

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Um 2013).

In addition, transgressions happened by the celebrity can hurt the brand of the organizations or products that celebrity endorses, as well as the celebrity brand (Bartz 2013). The damage would be irreparable and extreme even though well-placed apology could help in a way to restore the original image (Boyd 2011). The public are delighted by human brand since that huge impact and power of human brand; therefore, we cannot deny that the need of study for what variables could affect the athlete brand personality is currently most important thing.

However, in spite of the significance of athletes brand concept, the athletes research has constantly revolved around utilizing the athletes for endorsers for the brand's products (Choi 2012, Fleck 2012, Kelting 2013) instead of understanding the celebrity brand itself; in addition, unique brand personality is vital components of brand image (Plummer 1985, Keller 1993, Aaker 1997); hence, we are in need of studying what variables of brand personality influence consumers in order to drive sport market area.

Research Objective

This study is aimed at examining the effect of athlete brand

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personality on athlete attachment and brand supportive behavior in order to observe what and how factors of athlete brand personality would have impacts on athlete attachment and brand supportive behavior.

Research Questions

The following represents the research questions that will be addressed in this study:

RQ1: How much do five factors of athlete brand personality: tough, successful, charming, wholesome and imaginative influence athlete attachment?

RQ2: How much does athlete attachment influence brand supportive behavior?

RQ3: How much do five factors of athlete brand personality: tough, successful, charming, wholesome and imaginative influence brand supportive behavior?

Literature Review

Brand Personality

Aaker (1997) said brand personality as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand." To illustrate, brand personality is generally the ascribing of human characteristics with brand (Aaker 1997, Geuens 2009), and it can develop a feeling of comfort for people who find a brand that might fit their self-concept so that serve as a significant means of expressing self (Park 2010, Khan 2013). Consumers frequently acquire relationships with the brand similar to forming relationships with others, and the personality from the partner can affect the relationship (Fournier 1998, Aaker 2004).

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Table 1

Term Definition of the Brand Personality

Researcher	Definition
Batra, Lehmann and Singh, (1993).	Brand personality can be defined by human personality traits that consumers conceive brands to possess.
Aaker, (1997).	Brand personalities are considered as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand.”
Azoulay and Kapferer, (2003).	Brand personality is determined as human personality states that are related to brands.

Numerous scholars have consistently recommended that the personality or perceptions associated with a brand would be able to go beyond functional product-related benefits and attributes, (Hyung-Seok Lee 2009) and also both of them are related to demographical characteristics (e.g., age, gender, and social class), symbolic qualities and nonfunctional (Martineau 1958, Levy 1959). Consumption of branded products would allow consumers to represent their own self; so consumers sometimes assign unique and various personalities to brands (Belk 1988). Scholars propose that many consumers often describe brands as having several types of personalities, “such as Absolute Vodka being hip and cool”(Aaker 1997).

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Donavan (2013) said that celebrities in general are likely to tend to influence brand related behaviors and attitudes by maintaining and creating a symbolic brand personalities, which is congruent with the fan's ideal or actual self.

In addition, from the psychological perspective, personality is usually created under the influence of the living environment and the congenital gene (McCrae 2000). Sport team is usually strict to their brand personality traits. For instance, the NFL's Oakland Raiders literally represent their brand personalities that are tough and outlaw; furthermore, there are similar cases that "America's Team," and the Dallas Cowboys personify a wholesome, thus, All-American unique personality traits for a long time (Brad D. Carlson 2009).

Likewise, personality is manifested in many aspects and in different perspectives, with stability and consistency, such as interests, character and abilities. Therefore, it is possible to have a significant effect on the people's affective activities and cognitive in terms of personality (Aaker 1997). Due to the impact, during the last two decades in particular, researches on

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measuring and understanding brand personality in the area of consumer behavior and spending have been dramatically increased (Hyung-Seok Lee 2009). Existing as to efficient measurement of the multiple authors and construct throughout contexts have apparently discovered the limits of an original scale suggested by Aaker (Azoulay 2003, Heere 2010). It also has been long debated that the brand personality scale might lack of validity and conceptual completeness (Donavan 2013).

Meanwhile, many consumers easily view brands having exciting or friendly personalities because of advertisers' try attempts to anthropomorphize and humanize the brand (Sweeney 2006). For instance, Coca-Cola is frequently regarded by consumers as like "cool, all-American, and real," even though Pepsi is usually perceived as being "young, exciting, and hip," and Dr. Pepper is often portrayed as being "nonconforming, unique, and fun" (Aaker 1997).

As sports markets dramatically develop and grow, and the influence of celebrities (athlete, politician, actor/actress, etc.) have been abundantly

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rising over the past years, understanding the nature of brand personality is indispensable in modern lives. In spite of the aspect of brand personality has been extensively examined, however, few effort had been made to improve a scale for understanding and determining brand personality until Aaker's dimension research was released (Hyung-Seok Lee 2009).

According to Aaker (1997) both marketers and scholars have inevitably borrowed the traits of brand personality from the domain of psychology due to the lacking of study on brand personality has been examined in the marketing area.

Athlete Attachment and Brand Supportive Behavior

Athlete Attachment. Attachment is a relationship, which individual generally experience at early age with their parents, and as time goes by, routinely attachments create from other "targets", like human brands (Leets 1995). Someone immersed in an emotionally important relationship would be able to perceive the relationship partner as irreplaceable and differentiated (i.e., target specific; see (Hazan 1994). Nowadays, we can see how celebrity's attachment influence to the public. For instance, one participant in Peggy's (2015) article, shared this:

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“I totally understand it, bless her heart. But it is going to be hard. It is kind of bitter sweet, it is sad to see her go. I am looking forward to what she is going to do in the future because I know she will continue to be as wonderful as she is. But I miss her because it is almost a daily check-in for me to see what Oprah’s doing today. So, you know, it is different. A huge void. Huge void.” (Eva)

According to Thomson (2006) Similar to attachment in consumers and interpersonal relationships can also improve attachments to marketplace subjects, such as brands, products, and individuals. It also usually considered as a universal human experience that happens throughout the lifecycle (Schultz. 1989) that would give an opportunity for both connections as well as self-expression to others (Wallendorf 1988).

Table 2

Term Definition of the Attachment

Researcher	Definition
John Bowlby, (1969).	Attachment is considered as a “lasting psychological connectedness between human beings”.
Schultz, Kleine and Kernan, (1989).	Attachment is perceived as a human experience that emerges from the lifecycle.
Leets, De Becker and Giles, (1995).	Attachment is a relationship that occurs when human experience as children by their parents; later on, attachment usually arises with other “targets,” like human brands.

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According to Wallendorf and Arnould (1988), attachment was developed the linking of the object assumed deeper meaning, and was symbolic of individual connection to a favorite object. Attachment is defined in the sport area as an individual assigning emotional, functional and symbolic meaning to a sport object; furthermore, attachment is also perceived as a process in the object that could be used to enhance self-expression and attitudes (Funk 2006). Schultz and Kernan (1989) stress the attachment toward favorite possessions could represent the property of organization made by self-developmental tasks of integration, individuation, and temporal orientation.

In the same vein, brand attachment is considered as “possessing optimistic emotions of connection, affection and passion to the brand” (Thomson 2005). In addition, the relationship with the objects in sports context has been discovered to create an attachment (Trail 2000) from connections with several aspects of that objects (Robinson 2005). For instance, a collegiate football team offer opportunities for individuals to show belongingness, and identity (individuation) in the season (Gibson 2002).

As outlined above, consumers who have a significant attachment to

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a brand could pay a price to that brand. Attachment is also defined as a multifaceted elements of the relationship between a specific object and an individual which has been singularized and appropriated psychologically from interaction of person-object; however, attachment is not perceived as a process (Kleine 2004). On the flip side, Funk and James (2006) stressed that attachment as a step forms and arises when people found functional, emotional, and symbolic meaning to thoughts, images, and ideas with regard to an object in sports area. (e.g., team).

Brand Supportive Behavior. Brand supportive behavior is described as behaviors such as repurchasing, word of mouth, defending, self-promoting and any other supportive behavior to brand on the basis of positive and long relationship with brands (Keller 2008, Aspara 2009, Park 2010, Chung K. Kim 2012). Word of mouth can be justified by “informal communication between private parties concerning evaluations of goods and services” (Anderson 1998). Scholars stressed that repurchasing intention is considered as the potentiality or possibility of repurchasing any service or product in the future. Newman (1973) assert that the possibility of reusing or repurchasing would decrease if customers have experience of dissatisfaction with the product or service that they used. Therefore,

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repurchasing intention is perceived as one of the significant factor in marketing strategy (Fornell 1992). Self-promoting is designed to increase and augment one's status speaking directly in a proud and confident way to one's talents and strengths (Rudman 1998). Brand supportive behavior can be strong as brand attachment increase and develop, and brand attachment can be increased by the frequent use of that brand. (Chung K. kim 2008).

Table 3

Term Definition of the Brand Supportive Behavior

Researcher	Definition
Keller, (2008).	Brand supportive behavior can be defined as behaviors such as repurchasing, word of mouth, defending, self-promoting and any other supportive behavior to brand.
Aspara, (2009).	Any supportive behavior to brands based on positive relationship with brands.

Effect of Athlete Brand Personality on Athlete Attachment



Figure 1. The effect of athlete brand personality on athlete attachment

Consumers would become connected to the favorable brand since the favorable brand would be able to represent who he or she trusts that he or she is if the brand personality traits or image is similar to the consumer or fan personality (Orth 2010). Over the years, it has steadily been suggested that brand personalities play a crucial role in creating and forming brand attachment; hence, there is no doubt that both of them should be studied in depth for the sake of driving the market (Swaminathan 2009, Orth 2010).

In other words, the more a certain brand is a kind of consumer's self-concepts or images, the stronger is the individual connection. In this point, scholars argued that the more a brand shows or possess consumer's personality (i.e., self-congruence), the stronger which people's brand attachment becomes (Qing Yao 2015).

Effect of Athlete Attachment on Brand Supportive Behavior



Figure 2. The effect of athlete attachment on brand supportive behavior

When it comes to brand supportive behavior, it is constantly getting stronger and stronger as attachment develops and increase since there is an interrelation between brand personality and attachment (Keller 1993). Consumer's attachment to the celebrity affects an identification of products that the celebrity advertises, and that identification have a positive effect on forming favorable behavior toward the brand (Lee 2010). Once consumers begin to have strong attachment to the brand, steadily, they would bear emotional connectedness with the brand and that emotional connectedness have an intimate connection with consistent brand supportive behavior and brand loyalty (Yung Shin Sung 2004).

Operational Definition

Since this research focuses on sports related issues, the athlete brand personality, the concept, and definitions are modified by the objective

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of the research.

Table 4

Operational Definition of the Variables

Variable	Operational Definition
Athlete Brand Personality	Five factors: Tough, Successful, Charming, Wholesome and Imaginative.
Athlete Attachment	A person's perceived relevance of athlete brand personality on emotional connectedness.
Brand Supportive Behavior	The level of individual's potential for he or she will support for the endorsed brand,

Research Model & Hypothesis

Research Model. This research model consists on variables such as brand personality (tough, successful, charming, wholesome and imaginative), athlete attachment and brand supportive behavior. Tough, successful, charming, wholesome and imaginative will be the independent variable, and athlete attachment will be the mediator variable, and lastly brand supportive behavior will be the dependent variable. The following represents the models to be employed in this study:

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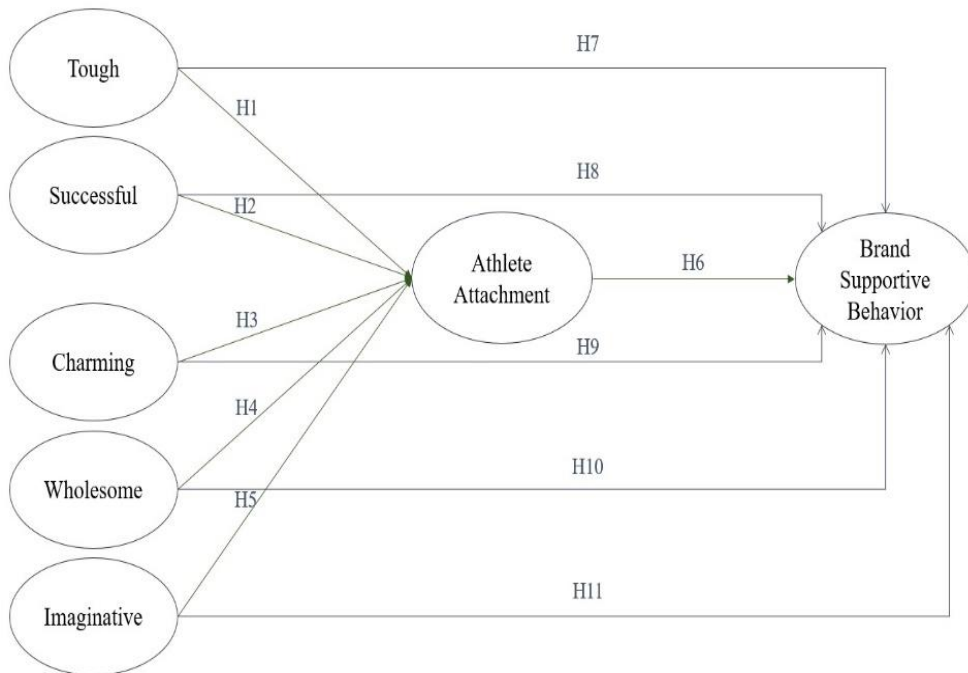


Figure 3. The research model

Hypothesis. H1: Tough will have a significant effect on athlete attachment.

H2: Successful will have a significant effect on athlete attachment.

H3: Charming will have a significant effect on athlete attachment.

H4: Wholesome will have a significant effect on athlete attachment.

H5: Imaginative will have a significant effect on athlete attachment.

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H6: Athlete attachment will have a significant effect on brand supportive behavior.

H7: Tough will have a significant effect on brand supportive behavior.

H8: Successful will have a significant effect on brand supportive behavior.

H9: Charming will have a significant effect on brand supportive behavior.

H10: Wholesome will have a significant effect on brand supportive behavior.

H11: Imaginative will have a significant effect on brand supportive behavior.

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Method

This research is aimed at exploring how the Athlete brand personality: tough, successful, charming, wholesome and imaginative influence athlete attachment, which will influence athlete attachment and brand supportive behavior. For achieving the objective, the following research method steps are as followed.

Participants

The target population for the current study was approximately 300 fans of professional soccer teams in Korea League. An online survey was carried out providing information about the objective of the survey, period, and content. The surveys were held for a week from September 12th to September 19th, 2016. A total of 300 surveys were collected and among those 269 surveys were used in this research due to insincere answers. In addition, the survey was carefully designed to be uploaded once the participants completely answered the survey.

Materials and Procedure

The survey items were developed after further revising an extent of marketing and psychology related articles. The items were carefully revised

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by experts in sport marketing area for correct translation from English to Korean and proper transmission of the questions' meaning. All items are represented in a 7-point Likert type scale borrowed from existing scales to be adapted to the research.

Athlete brand personality. The brand personality: Tough, successful, charming, wholesome and imaginative were measured with 5 items (single item) developed by Carlson D (2009). Brand personality traits were measured with the measures of single-item pretested by Carlson et al. (2009) with original 15 items from Aaker (1997). After pretest, the five attributes of tough, successful, imaginative, wholesome and charming were perceived as a proper markers of brand personality in sport context even though other attributes were not Carlson et al. (2009). There are several advantages to utilizing single-item scales: brevity or ease of use, simplicity and global measurement. However, one major criticism of utilizing a single item in measuring a construct is a lack of reliability. To measure the reliability of a scale, researchers typically use two different assessments: a test-retest method and/or a test of internal consistency (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black 1998).

Table 5

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Measurement Developed for Independent Variables

Variable	Survey Item	Source
Tough	I think () is tough.	Carlson D (2009)
Successful	I think () is successful.	
Charming	I think () is charming.	
Wholesome	I think () is wholesome.	
Imaginative	I think () is imaginative.	

Athlete attachment. The athlete attachment was also measured with 3 items developed by Thomson (2006).

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Table 6

Measurement Developed for Mediator Variables

Variable	Survey Item	Source
Athlete Attachment	1) I would experience an emotional loss if I had to stop being ()'s fan.	Carlson D (2009)
	2) When someone criticized (), it feels like a personal insult.	
	3) If a story in the media criticized (), it would affect me negatively	

Brand supportive behavior. Lastly, the brand supportive behavior was measured with 6 items developed by Park et al (2010). Once again, all questions were used 7-point Likert type scale and modified by the purpose of this research.

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Table 7

Measurement Developed for dependent variables

Variable	Survey Item	Source
Brand Supportive Behavior	1) I will purchase products that the athlete advertises.	Park et al (2010)
	2) I will recommend products that the athlete advertises.	
	3) I will present products that the athlete advertises as a gift.	
	4) I will wait to purchase products that the athlete advertises.	
	5) I will always purchase if there are new products that the athlete advertises.	
	6) I will promote products that the athlete advertises.	

Procedure

The analysis was executed using IBM SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 22.0 for the sake of testing the hypothesis presented in this study. Furthermore, the present study carried out the descriptive analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, reliability analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM).

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Various descriptive statistics such as measures of central tendency and measures of variability were executed using SPSS 22.0 to clearly identify the demographic characteristics of subjects who participated in the online survey. AMOS 22.0 was used to apply confirmatory factor analysis. The validity of all the questionnaire items that were used on the online survey which was tested through confirmatory factor analysis before analyzing the data. Reliability analysis evaluates whether or not a set of the variable is reliable in each item measurement.

Cronbach's alpha is commonly used as one of the most popular methods for measuring the internal consistency of the variables. SEM is used to check the relationship between the latent variable and observed variable; furthermore, analyze the correlation of the latent variables and path analysis. On the basis of these verifications, this research will check whether this model will support and fit.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Demographic characteristics of the participants (N=269) are presented in Table 8. The male and female participants' percentages were 64.3% and 35.7%, and twenties were participated most by 84% and thirties by 13.4%, forties 1.5%, teenagers 0.7% and over fifties 0.4%. Much detailed demographic variables were indicated in Table 5.

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Table 8

Demographic Variables

Variable	Group	N	%
Gender	Male	173	64.3%
	Female	96	35.7%
Age	16~19	2	0.7%
	20~29	226	84%
	30~39	36	13.4%
	40~49	4	1.5%
	50+	1	0.4%
Education Level	High School Graduate	12	4.4%
	College Student	128	47.4%
	College Graduate	79	29.3%
	Graduate Student	30	11.1%
	Graduate Degree	21	7.8

Reliability Analysis

In general, the high reliability of the measurement tool means that the same results can be obtained even with repeated measurement and that the measurement method is relatively accurate, reliable, predictable, and consistent across the items that measure the variables.

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This study adapts Cronbach's Alpha methods to examine reliability. Reliability is significantly higher once the Cronbach alpha coefficient is greater than 0.8%, and the reliability of the measurement items is relatively high once the coefficient is 0.7 or more. Generally, a reliability of 0.6 or more is typically acceptable (Nunnally 1967).

In this paper, Cronbach's Alpha value is analyzed as explained in Table 6 and 7 about athlete attachment and brand supportive behavior. Table 9 describes that the Cronbach's Alpha value of all variables was from 0.789 to 0.920, indicating that the items are reliable.

Table 9

Reliability Test Result

Variable	No. items	α
Athlete Attachment	5	.789
Brand Supportive Behavior	3	.920

Note. α = Cronbach's index of internal consistency.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Validity Test

Confirmatory factor analysis. Following the reliability analysis, confirmatory analysis was carried out on all variables to verify the

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intensiveness of the items.

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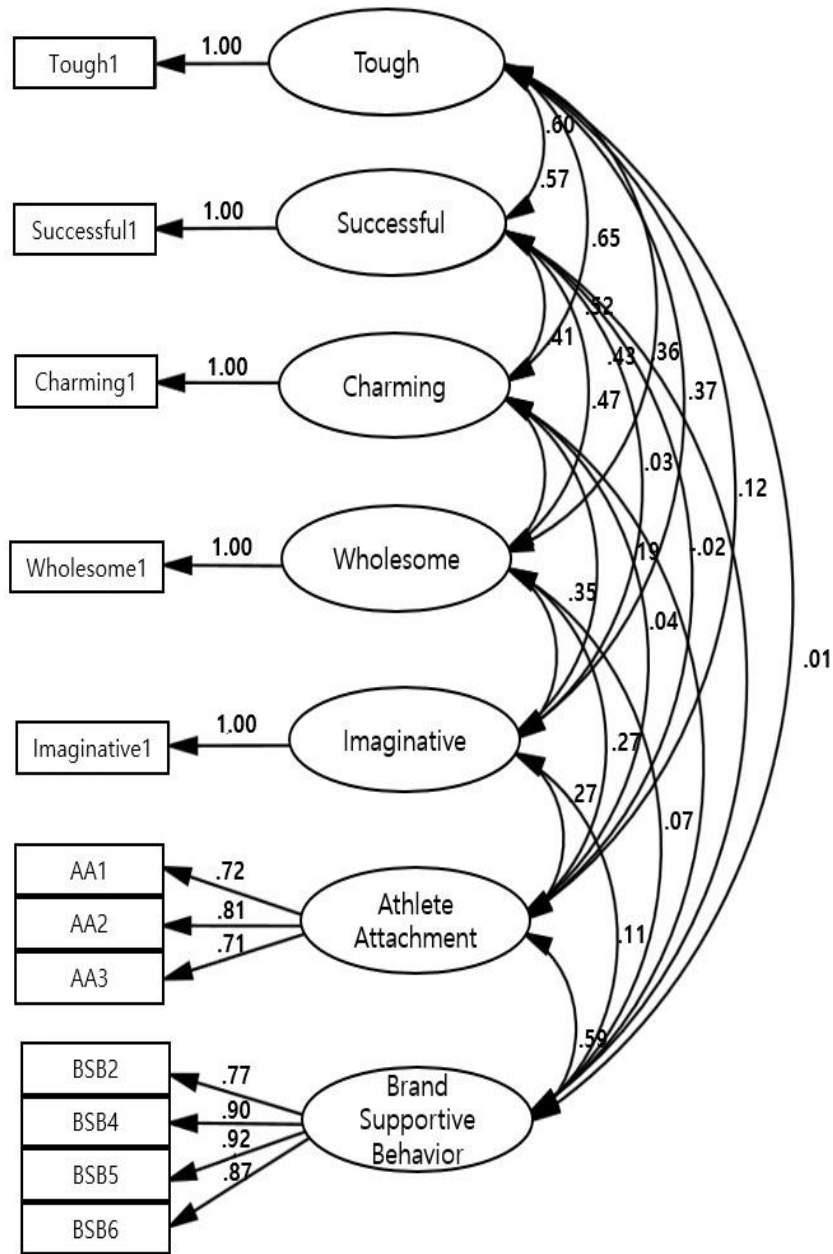


Figure 4. Result of a confirmatory factor analysis

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Table 10

Factor Loadings for Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Variables	Items	Factor Loading	SE	CR
Athlete Brand Personality	Tough1	.922*	-	-
	Successful1	.922*	-	-
	Charming1	.922*	-	-
	Wholesome1	.922*	-	-
	Imaginative1	.922*	-	-
Athlete Attachment	AA1	.715	0.98	10.253
	AA2	.811	.101	11.011
	AA3	.713	-	-
Brand Supportive Behavior	BSB2	.765	.044	15.781
	BSB4	.896	.051	20.953
	BSB5	.915	.049	21.767
	BSB6	.874	-	-

Note. SE = standard error; CR = critical ratio

*This latent variable was measured with a single item. Therefore, factor loadings were fixed at .922.

The error terms and also paths on the every single item latent constructs were appropriately fixed (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Joreskog,

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1993). Concretely, fixed path coefficients are both equal to square root of reliability estimate (e.g., alpha) for the sake of a measure since single-indicators are generally being used to measure unobservable, latent or constructs, we have to account for measurement error (Netemeyer et al. 1990). The error terms and paths of each single item latent variables were literally fixed as suggested by Joreskog and Sorbom (1993, p. 196). Typically, reliability values more than 0.7 are acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Therefore, once using single item indicators, Calson (2013) recommend a reliability of 0.85 that corresponds to the path coefficient of .922.

Table 11

Fit Indices for Confirmatory Factor Analysis

χ^2	df	χ^2/df	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
82.934	38	2.158	.956	.974	.065

Note. TLI = tucker lewis index; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual.

* $p < .05$.

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis were $\chi^2 = 83.934$, df

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= 38, $p = .000$, $\chi^2/df = 2.158$, TLI = .956, CFI = .974, RMSEA = .065, so the overall fit of the model is considered appropriate.

Convergent and Divergent validity test. To verify the hypothesis, correlation matrix analysis was performed first, and the correlation of each variable was as shown in Table 5, 6, 7. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), if the extracted mean variance (AVE) of each factor is greater than the square of the correlation coefficient of the factor, then the discriminant validity of the measurement model is considered to exist. Using the AVE value of the confirmatory factor analysis table, the values of AVE and the squares of the factors are compared and compared. It can be seen that the correlation coefficient values are all smaller than the AVE values

Table 12

Convergent and Divergent Validity Test Result

Variable	Validity	
	CR	AVE
Athlete Attachment	.823	.608
Brand	.988	.954
Supportive Behavior		

Structural Equation Modeling

Structural equation model fit test. This study is an experimental design to test whether athlete brand personality have a significant influence on the brand supportive behavior through the athlete attachment. The model test is a process of verifying the validity of the theoretical model presented in the study.

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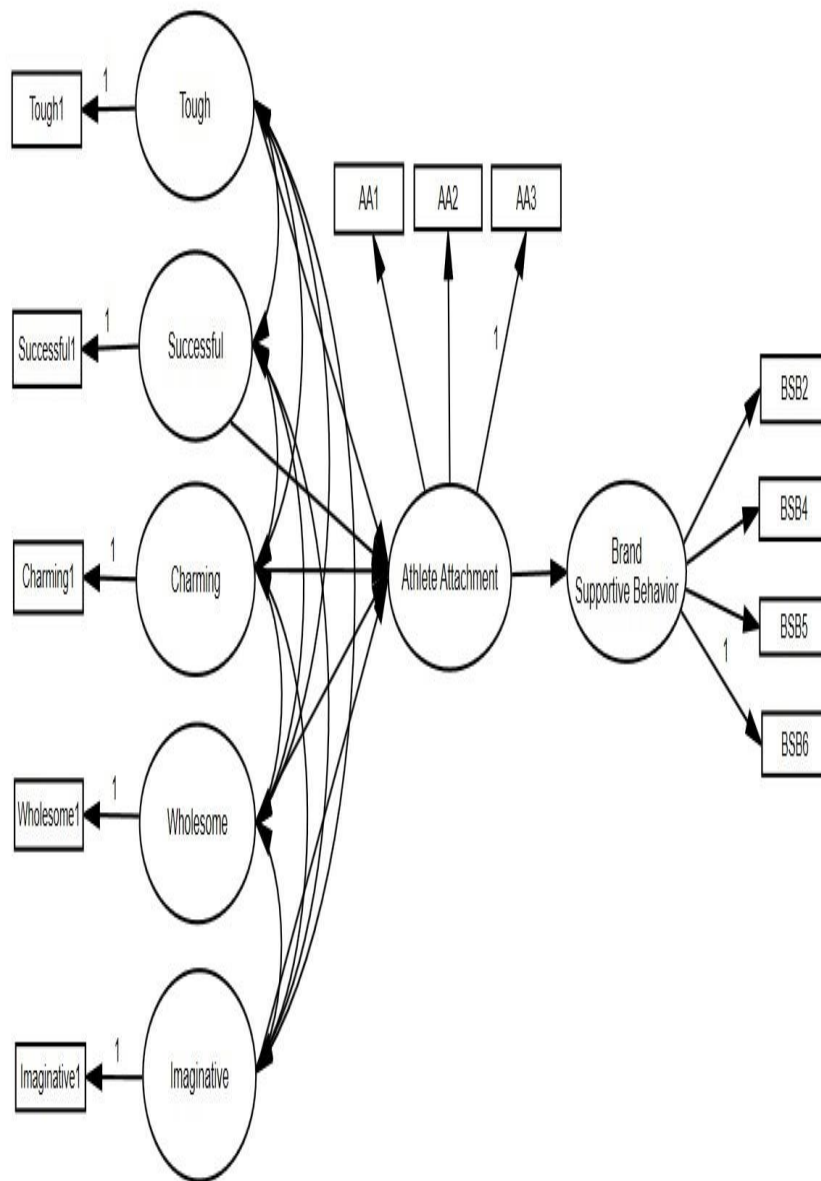


Figure 5. The casual relationship and path of the research model.

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Table 13

Fit Indices for Structural Equation Model

χ^2	df	χ^2/df	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
85.868	43	1.997	.975	.962	.060

Note. TLI = tucker lewis index; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual.

* $p < .05$.

Research Hypothesis test. To verify the hypothesis of this study, the standardization path coefficient and significance test of the structural model were tested. The standardized path coefficient for the study model is shown in Figure 8, and the standardized factor load for each factor. The result of the standardization path coefficient and significance test between each potential variable are shown in Table 16 below.

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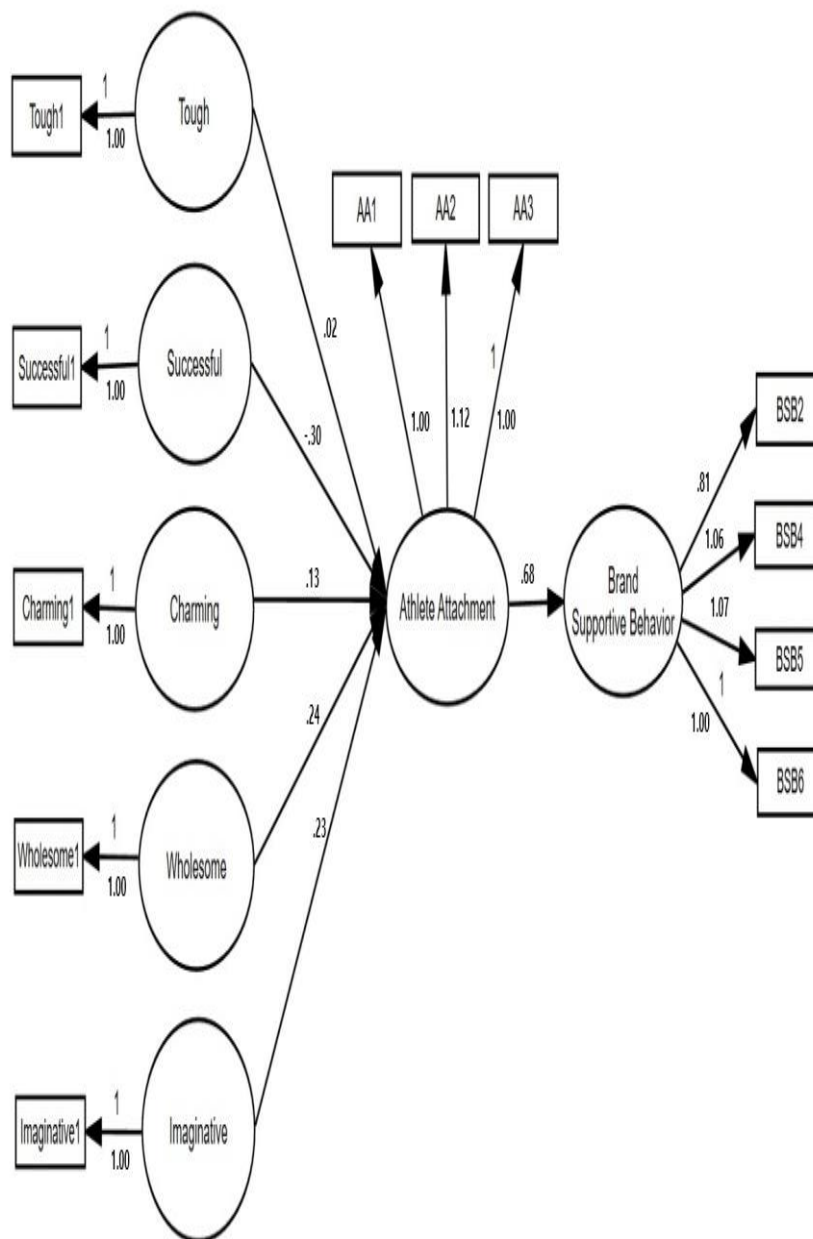


Figure 6. Standardization path coefficient of the research model

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Table 14

Significance Test Result of the Research Model

Path	Estimate	SE	CR	p
Tough → AA	.023	.085	.266	.790
Successful → AA	-.301	.090	-3.350	***
Charming → AA	.127	.100	1.273	.203
Wholesome → AA	.242	.068	3.580	***
Imaginative → AA	.232	.073	3.179	.001
AA → BSB	.679	.085	8.016	***
Tough → BSB	.015	-	-	.791
Successful → BSB	-.204	-	-	.005
Charming → BSB	.086	-	-	.261
Wholesome → BSB	.164	-	-	.015
Imaginative → BSB	.157	-	-	.003

Note. Estimate = estimate of regression weights; SE = standard error; CR = critical ratio;

AA = Athlete Attachment

BSB = Brand Supportive Behavior

H1: Tough will have a no significant effect on athlete attachment.

The standardized path coefficient representing the relationship between the two variables was .023 ($p > .05$) which shows no significant effect. Thus, hypothesis 1 was not adopted.

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H2: Successful will have a no significant effect on athlete attachment. The standardized path coefficient representing the relationship between the two variables was $-.301$ ($p < .05$), which shows no significant effect. Thus, hypothesis 2 was not adopted.

H3: Charming will have a significant effect on athlete attachment. The standardized path coefficient representing the relationship between the two variables was $.127$ ($p < .05$), which shows a significant effect. Thus, hypothesis 3 was adopted.

H4: Wholesome will have a significant effect on athlete attachment. The standardized path coefficient representing the relationship between the two variables was $.242$ ($p < .05$), which shows a significant effect. Thus, hypothesis 4 was adopted.

H5: Imaginative will have a significant effect on athlete attachment. The standardized path coefficient representing the relationship between the two variables was $.232$ ($p < .05$), which shows a significant effect. Thus, hypothesis 5 was adopted.

H6: Athlete attachment will have a significant effect on brand supportive behavior. The standardized path coefficient representing the

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relationship between the two variables was .679 ($p < .05$), which shows a significant effect. Thus, hypothesis 6 was adopted.

H7: Tough will have no a significant effect on brand supportive behavior. The standardized path coefficient representing the relationship between the two variables was .015 ($p > .05$), which shows a no significant effect. Thus, hypothesis 7 was not adopted.

H8: Successful will have no a significant effect on brand supportive behavior. The standardized path coefficient representing the relationship between the two variables was -.204 ($p < .05$), which shows a no significant effect. Thus, hypothesis 8 was not adopted.

H9: Charming will have a significant effect on brand supportive behavior. The standardized path coefficient representing the relationship between the two variables was .086 ($p < .05$), which shows a significant effect. Thus, hypothesis 7 was adopted.

H10: Wholesome will have a significant effect on brand supportive behavior. The standardized path coefficient representing the relationship between the two variables was .164 ($p < .05$), which shows a significant effect. Thus, hypothesis 10 was adopted.

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H11: Imaginative will have a significant effect on brand supportive behavior. The standardized path coefficient representing the relationship between the two variables was .157 ($p < .05$), which shows a significant effect. Thus, hypothesis 11 was adopted.

Discussion

The primary object of this article was to examine the influence of athlete brand personality on athlete attachment and brand supportive behavior despite the difficulty that variables of athlete brand personality are little-known that influence fans with individual athletes (Carlson 2013). The results of this research revealed several worthy issues that should be addressed for the sake of future marketing management.

This research assumed that all five attributes of athlete brand personality suggested by Carlson (2013) will positively have an effect on athlete attachment. However, two of its attributes had a negative effect on athlete attachment. Nonetheless, athlete attachment had a positive effect on brand supportive behavior. As Aaker (1997) stated that it can be possible to enhance the connection between the brand and consumer, this research proved that again on the whole. Therefore, the most of the hypothesis in this research are concurred with the previous researches.

Theoretical Implications

Using athletes as human brands, this study examined the effect of brand personality on attachment and brand supportive behavior in sport

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context identified by Carlson et al. (2009). The results of this research extend and underscore the work of Aaker (1997) and Thomson (2006) by demonstrating that athletes have important and unique personality traits that effect on athlete attachment and consumer behavior. In other words, this study suggests that consumers can see their favorite athlete as possessing certain personalities that influence their degree of interest, motivation and cognitive identification.

Second, this study found the significance of the relationships between the athlete personality with athlete attachment and brand supportive behavior. Specifically, only charming, wholesome and imaginative had a significant positive effect on athlete attachment and brand supportive behavior while tough and successful surprisingly had a no effect on it. Thus, consumers should be more possibly to identify with an athlete perceived to be charming, wholesome and imaginative; and the traits of tough and successful are not perceived to be unique and positive.

Third, most of studies related to brand personality have carried out the effect of relationship between brand personality, identification and spending. However, this study extended previous researches by examining the relationship between athlete attachment and brand supportive behavior

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that involves repurchasing, word of mouth, defending and self-promoting. Therefore, this study revealed the worthwhile facts that considerably affect consumer consumption, and enlarges theoretical view of consumer psychology.

Managerial Implications

My findings suggest that the brand personality traits of charming, wholesome and imaginative are an important variable in predicting athlete-related consumption behaviors; therefore, team or manager should work to enhance these three variables of the athlete in order to increase fan's attachment and brand supportive behavior for the endorsed brands. Consumer assessments of an athlete could have significant effects on evaluation of an athlete attachment as well as brand supportive behavior related to its market offerings.

Second, given the findings of this study, firms should be more likely to emphasize some marketing efforts on communicating and connecting the specific traits of the athlete personality with the fans. Over the past year, for instance, while the National Basketball Association (N.B.A) have made furious endeavors to be outstanding athletes when promoting matches, few

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studies have conducted in terms of variables that influence fan connection with athletes and substantial effects on products-related results. Hence, as firms, promotional messages of the athlete should focus attention on certain unique traits such as charming, wholesome and imaginative rather than tough and successful since these three traits are more perceived as a significant positive effect for consumers according to the results of this study.

As an additional consideration, the sports industries are in need of effective and specific tools that how to promote athletes to consumers with the unique personality traits such as charming, wholesome and imaginative rather than just emphasizing individual players without any strategies when promoting games. When sport marketers make strategies to enhance consumer perception of athletes and drive consumer consumptions, the strategies should be well balanced with theoretical implications as well as managerial implications.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that sport has a significant impact on retailing. As the sport industry is dramatically developing, athletes influence product sales in a diverse range of retail outlets. Nike, one of the biggest major

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producer of athletic apparel and footwear in the world, sells to 24,000 retailers in the United States (Nike, Inc. Annual Report, 2006). Consumers spend a large sum of money on purchasing retailers that increase the sport consumption. Hence, numerous firms try to tie their brand to popular athletes since they assume that the athletes have a strong connection with consumers.

Therefore, this research is worthwhile to study the effect of athlete brand personality on athlete attachment and brand supportive behavior. This result gives important implications to the sport industry that the athlete brand personality traits of charming, wholesome and imaginative have a significant effect on the athlete attachment and brand supportive behavior while the traits of tough and successful have a no significant effect on both. Sport managers and marketers will be able to promote athletes as a strong brand that connect with consumers with the results from this study, resulting in long-lasting relationships between consumer and brand, and profitable retail spending.

Limitation & Future Research Directions

This research can be regarded as providing an important step to better understand the effect of athlete brand personality on athlete

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attachment and brand supportive behavior; moreover, the limitations of this research should offer some instructions for future research works to sport marketing.

First and foremost, the original 15 items suggested by Aaker (1997) can be recommended instead of the final five attributes selected by pretest among 15 items due to its single measurement scale proposed by Carlson (2009) applied in this study. The concept of brand personality is too broad to adapt to any brands and sport areas. The variety of brand types, however, is too suitable to justify using a single measurements scale which is equally proper in all contents. Thus, future researches are recommended to compare the current model to one in a multidimensional scale.

Second, this research investigated relationships with using athletes. Study the current model of relationships utilizing sport teams and athletes simultaneously could also be interesting since few studies have been conducted so far. The generalizability of current findings in sport context is restricted; hence, utilizing two variables of athletes and teams will enhance the generalizability of the findings in sport context. As noted previously, future research should explore additional attributes to enhance reliability of athlete brand personality.

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Lastly, although all the data collected in this study were randomly spread by the researcher through the online, the participants' ages are tended to twenties; and the male sex ratio is superfluous to the female sex ratio. Thus, to increase the external validity and make this research generalized, adjusting the ages and sex ratio may provide a more accurate result of the future study.

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Appendix

설문지

안녕하십니까?

본 설문은 운동선수 특징이 운동선수 애착과 후원하는 브랜드에 대한 브랜드 지지행동에 미치는 영향을 연구하고자 하는 것입니다.

본 설문에 응해주신 여러분의 개인적 사항이나 응답 내용 등은 통계법 제 8 조 및 제9 조의 규정에 의하여 무기명으로 처리되며, 연구 목적 외에는 절대 사용되지 않음을 약속 드립니다.

본 설문지에 나오는 문항들은 맞고 틀리는 것이 없으며, 각 문항을 잘 읽어보시고 여러분의 경험과 생각에 따라 한 문항도 빠짐없이 솔직하게 응답해 주시면 본 연구에 큰 도움이 될 것입니다.

설문에 참여해 주셔서 대단히 감사합니다.

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E - mail : w o o r a m 2 3 0 6 7 @ s n u . a c . k r

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○ 다음은 운동선수 특징에 대한 귀하의 생각을 알아보는 질문입니다.

	항목	전혀 그렇지 않다				매우 그렇다		
1	나는 () 선수가 건전하다고 생각한다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
2	나는 () 선수가 창의적이라고 생각한다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
3	나는 () 선수가 성공적인 선수 생활을 하고 있다고/했다고 생각한다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
4	나는 () 선수가 매력적이라고 생각한다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
5	나는 () 선수가 강인하다고 생각한다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦

○ 다음은 운동선수 애착에 대한 귀하의 생각을 알아보는 질문입니다.

	항목	전혀 그렇지 않다				매우 그렇다		
1	나는 만약 () 선수의 팬을 더 이상 할 수 없게 된다면 속상할 것이다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
2	나는 만약 누군가가 () 선수를 욕한다면 나를 모욕하는 것 같은 기분일 것이다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
3	나는 만약 어느 방송에서 () 선수를 비난한다면 그 부정적인 효과는 나에게 미칠 것이라고 생각한다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦

THE EFFECT OF ATHLETE BRAND PERSONALITY

○ 다음은 브랜드 지지행동에 대한 귀하의 생각을 알아보는 질문입니다.

	항목	전혀 그렇지 않다 매우 그렇다						
		①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
1	나는 () 선수가 광고하는 상품을 구매 할 것이다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
2	나는 () 선수가 광고하는 상품을 다른 사람에게 추천 할 것이다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
3	나는 () 선수가 광고하는 상품을 다른 사람에게 선물 할 것이다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
4	나는 () 선수가 광고하는 상품을 사기 위해 기다릴 것이다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
5	나는 () 선수가 광고하는 신상품이 있다면 항상 구매할 것이다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
6	나는 () 선수가 광고하는 상품을 홍보할 것이다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦

THE EFFECT OF ATHLETE BRNAD PERSOANLTIY

○ 다음은 간단한 인구통계학적 질문입니다.

1 . 귀하의 성별은?	① 남자 ② 여자
2 . 귀하의 연령대는?	① 1 0 대 ② 2 0 대 ③ 3 0 대 ④ 4 0 대 ⑤ 5 0 대 ⑥ 6 0 대 이상
3 . 귀하의 학력 수준은?	① 중학교 졸업 이하 ② 고등학교 졸업 ③ 대학교 재학 ④ 대학교 졸업 ⑤ 대학원 재학 ⑥ 대학원 졸업 이상

○설문에 응해주셔서 대단히 감사합니다

국 문 초 록

운동선수 브랜드 특징이 운동선수
애착과 후원브랜드에 대한 브랜드
지지행동에 미치는 영향

김 우 람
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글로벌스포츠매니지먼트

현대의 스포츠스타는 단순히 유명인이 아니라 그 자체로 하나의 브랜드로써 소비자들의 마음속에 자리 잡고 있다. 따라서, 소비자들이 유명 운동선수에게 가지는 애착의 선행 요인들이 무엇인지, 그리고 이러한 애착이 브랜드 지지행동에 어떻게 영향을 미치는지에 대한 연구는 점차 중요시 대두되고 있다. 하지만, 최근

THE EFFECT OF ATHLETE BRAND PERSONALITY

선행연구들을 살펴보면 유명인의 영향력이나 효과에 대한 연구들은 활발하게 진행되고 있으나 그 유명인에 대해 사람들이 갖는 애착 요인이 무엇이고 그 애착이 유명인이 후원하는 브랜드에 대한 브랜드 지지행동에 미치는 영향 등의 관계에 대해 총체적으로 파악하려는 연구는 미흡한 실정이다.

이와 같은 배경과 기존 연구들의 제한 점을 바탕으로 본 연구의 목적은 운동선수 브랜드 특징이 운동선수 애착과 후원브랜드에 대한 브랜드 지지행동에 미치는 영향을 검증하는 것에 있다. 이를 통해 기존 운동선수 브랜드 특징, 애착, 브랜드지지행동 간의 관계 검증에 대한 미흡한 측면을 보완 할 수 있을 것으로 판단된다.

이러한 연구 목적을 달성하기 위하여 본 연구에서는 오프라인으로 설문조사를 실시하였고 회수된 설문지 300부 중 불성실하게 응답한 31부를 제외한 269부를 최종분석 자료로 활용하였다. 수집된 자료는 SPSS 21.0을 활용하여 기술통계분석과 신뢰도 분석을 하였으며, 또한 AMOS 21.0을 통해 확인적 요인분석(CFA)과 타

당도 분석을 실시하였다. 마지막으로 가설검증을 위해서는 구조방정식 모형 분석(SEM)을 실시하였다.

이를 통해 도출된 분석 결과는 다음과 같다. 운동선수 브랜드 특징 중 매력성, 건전성, 창의성은 브랜드 지지행동에 긍정적 직접 및 간접 영향을 끼치는 것으로 도출되었다. 반면 운동선수 브랜드 특징 중 강인함과 성공성은 브랜드 지지행동에 유의미한 관계가 없는 것으로 나타났다.

본 연구의 결과를 통해 마케팅 담당자들은 운동선수 브랜드 특징의 중요성에 대해 알아 볼 수 있고, 또한 이러한 연구의 결과를 이해하고 활용함으로써 운동선수 마케팅 전략 수립의 근거로서 활용할 수 있다.

주요어 : 운동선수 브랜드 특징, 운동선수 애착, 브랜드 지지행동
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